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**Rezension von "Tom Buchanan, East Wind: China and the British Left,  
1925-1976. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012"**

Knüsel, Ariane

**Abstract:** Tom Buchanan's insightful and exhaustively researched study fills a gap in the historiography of British views on China. While the past years have seen an increasing number of publications about Anglo-Chinese relations, the British Left's relations with China have been mostly ignored. Buchanan analyzes three aspects of this relationship between 1925 and 1976: namely, the role the British Left played in organizations like the China Campaign Committee or the Britain-China Friendship Association, "the policies and attitudes of the 'mainstream' Labour movement" (p. ix), and the points of convergence between the Labour Party and the non-Labour Left. However, while the first aspect is well covered in the book and gives it a certain narrative coherence, the mainstream labor movement does not figure as prominently as might be expected, and the Labour Party ...

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Yamane documented in *Student Movements for Multiculturalism: Challenging the Color Line in Higher Education* (2001), even in the conservative 1980s Madison remained at the forefront of the battle against the curricular color line, or that, as Mary Jo Buhle and Paul Buhle demonstrated in *It Started in Wisconsin: Dispatches from the New Labor Protest* (2011), university activists played a major role in Madison's dramatic labor protests and occupation of the state capitol during spring 2011. The lesson from all this may be that it is impossible for a short book, even one as generally well researched, accessible, and illuminating as this one, to do justice to the long 1960s.

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GUADALUPE SAN MIGUEL, JR. *Chicana/o Struggles for Education: Activism in the Community*. (University of Houston Series in Mexican American Studies, number 7.) College Station: Texas A&M University Press. 2013. Pp. 240. \$40.00.

In this well-documented and thorough study, Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. provides an overview of efforts to improve educational opportunity for Mexican Americans since the 1960s. The need for such a study is compelling given the extent and scope of activities pursued by Mexican Americans to reach their goal of better educating their children. The underlying theme of San Miguel's analysis, that these efforts emerged from the grassroots level, helps us to understand the significance of the three major strategies employed by the Mexican American community: contestation, advocacy, and alternative forms of education. Educational policy and practice in the United States have traditionally been determined on the community and state levels, with little federal involvement until the 1960s. Mexican Americans have followed that tradition in their many diverse struggles to influence schooling at all levels, working from the bottom up.

Activism for education suffused the Chicano movement with youthful vigor, as students often took the lead in contesting on behalf of their own educational conditions. Student walkouts not only drew attention to issues of discrimination, lack of access, and cultural/linguistic elimination, but also awakened and energized adults in the community. The first student walkouts in Los Angeles in 1968 inspired a wave of young activists to demand that their unique educational needs be met and their cultural heritage valorized. While the student movement could claim few substantive victories, students' brave and impassioned struggle empowered the Mexican American community to advocate for bilingual education, to bring legal action against discriminatory practices, and to challenge biased testing practices.

The strength of San Miguel's narrative is its focus on the role of Mexican Americans themselves and how they demanded inclusion in school governance, administration, and teaching while insisting upon preserving and constructing their own identity. Such advocacy was

vital in order for them to avoid the overwhelming pressures to conform or be excluded from the mainstream. Increasing the numbers of Mexican Americans who graduated from college was key to their being placed in these positions of power, while creating curricula that included Chicano/a studies from the elementary school to the university reinforced cultural identity and made schooling more appealing to Mexican American children.

Certainly the hallmark of achievement in education for Mexican Americans was the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, and San Miguel devotes a chapter to its origins and implementation. Bilingual education was an issue around which educators could rally because it seemed to address so many linguistic, cultural, and academic concerns. It also signaled the entrance of the federal government into the educational arena and tied education to the War on Poverty. As San Miguel points out, however, the original legislation had limited scope until Mexican American activists weighed in to expand the law in 1974 to include more funding for professional and curricular development and make the policy mandatory. The 1970s stand out as the heyday of innovation in bilingual education as a result. Unfortunately, such vibrancy also invited a fierce backlash against bilingual education beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present. While proponents of bilingual education had significant empirical evidence on their side, the ideological arguments against it coincided with a rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment to undermine what progress had been made toward culturally inclusive curricular and pedagogical practices. Undeterred, Mexican American parents have shown a willingness to consider alternatives in religious institutions, unconventional schools, charter schools, and voucher programs. Such flexibility reveals the community's commitment to quality education and preserving linguistic and cultural diversity, ahead of mere access to mainstream schools.

San Miguel has given us a straightforward and insightful narrative of the Mexican American community's efforts to make education work for their children. His no-nonsense style is refreshingly free of the theoretical digressions that too often torment readers of educational history. This is a useful book, showing what has and has not worked in educational advocacy, and why. The reader cannot help but be impressed with the persistence of Mexican Americans in the struggle for educational opportunity and cultural integrity. As San Miguel stresses, these were ordinary people, parents and community leaders, who understood the importance of education for children and who would not abide discriminatory or exclusionary practices. There is much to admire in this story, but it is a continuing saga, and San Miguel has equipped us with the necessary criteria to know what to look for as the struggle goes on.

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